

Peer Pressure

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The car roared down Main Street. The radio was blasting as Ryan drove down the street. “Oh my God, Julia just Snapped me!” The car swerved and screeched. Ryan tapped the Snap, and seeing a picture of Julia at the beach, replied back “I wish I was there.” Ryan occasionally looked up to see the road, and had one hand off the wheel and one on his phone. Singing along to Disney songs, Ryan was clearly having the time of his life.

The car screamed past a ‘Speed Limit 25’ sign, knocking it down. The speedometer on Ryan’s car read 46 miles per hour. Ryan reached down to grab his drink, a can of Bud Light. Sure, he was underage, but his friends all drank, and so why worry? The car skidded across the double line and hit a pothole. The car bounced, and the beer spilled. Ryan began chugging the remainder of the can in order to not spill any more. A Snap rang out. Ryan checked the Snap, and replied, with both hands off the wheel, “I’m just driving. Not doing much.”

Down the street, a school bus driver was calmly driving her bus. Seeing a student waiting at her bus stop, the bus driver put her yellow lights on and prepared to slow down to stop. Ryan paid no attention, as he was still texting. The red lights flashed, and the girl prepared to cross the street. The girl did not see Ryan coming, but the bus driver did. She laid on the horn. The girl looked like a deer in the headlights as the speeding car approached.

Ryan was knocked unconscious by the collision. When he woke, he heard a woman screaming and saw the wreck. His car had been totaled. He was trapped in the vehicle. He began to sober up quickly when he realized how serious the situation was. The bus had its hazard lights on and the driver was outside, comforting the mother of the girl. He grabbed his beer bottle and threw it from the window. It smashed onto the ground, alarming the mother and driver. “What the hell is wrong with you????” the mother screamed at Ryan. She proceeded to try and storm towards him, but the bus driver held her back. Three police cars roared in, followed by two fire trucks and four ambulances. The firefighters used the ‘jaws of life’ to pry Ryan out. The EMTs rushed over to help the girl, and the police charged at Ryan, tackling him.

“You are charged with manslaughter, driving to endanger, driving while under the influence of alcohol, reckless conduct, and distracted driving.” Ryan could hardly believe his ears. A beautiful day turned horribly wrong. Ryan had pleaded guilty to these crimes, and this was his sentencing. The family of the deceased 11 year old girl was in court, crying and watching the sentence. Ryan was angry. Not at the family, but at himself. Not only had he blatantly endangered everyone in the area, by texting and driving, but he had followed up with a genius decision to drink and drive. The judge slammed his gavel down, sentencing the teen to 35 years to life in prison. Before the girl’s family left, the mother stood up to speak. “I have just one thing to say to you, Ryan...Before you drink and drive, think...don’t you want to arrive ALIVE?”